

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Leeper Farm  
other names/site number Leeper-Powers Farm

### 2. Location

street & number 5878 Leepers Ferry Road N/A ☐ not for publication  
city or town White Pine ☒ vicinity  
stat Tennessee code TN county Hamblen code 063 zip code 37813  
e \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register.  
☐ See continuation sheet

- ☐ determined eligible for the  
National Register.  
☐ See continuation sheet

- ☐ determined not eligible for the  
National Register

- ☐ removed from the National  
Register.

- ☐ other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Leeper Farm  
Name of Property

Hamblen County, Tennessee  
County and State

## 5. Classification

### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private  
☐ public-local  
☐ public-State  
☐ public-Federal

### Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- ☐ building(s)  
☒ district  
☐ site  
☐ structure  
☐ object

### Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
6	2	buildings
1	1	sites
		structures
		objects
7	3	Total

### Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

### Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

## 6. Function or Use

### Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling  
secondary structure  
AGRICULTURE: Animal facility  
storage  
Processing  
Agricultural field  
LANDSCAPE: water source

### Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling  
secondary structure  
AGRICULTURE: Animal facility  
storage  
Processing  
Agricultural field  
LANDSCAPE: wildlife refuge

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival

### Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone, concrete  
walls Weatherboard  
roof Asphalt shingle  
other Wood

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations N/A

(Mark "x" in all boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** moved from its original location.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE  
ARCHITECTURE

### Period of Significance

1896-1957

### Significant Dates

1896, c. 1922, c. 1952

### Significant Person

(complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Powers, Lee

### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

### Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

### Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ Previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey  
# \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering  
Record # \_\_\_\_\_

### Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State Agency
- ☐ Federal Agency
- ☐ Local Government
- ☐ University
- ☒ Other

Name of repository: East Tennessee History Center

Leeper Farm  
Name of Property

Hamblen County, Tennessee  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 154 acres

White Pine, 163 SE; Morristown, 163 NE; Springvale,  
172 NW; Rankin, 172 SW

### UTM References

(place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	17	297150	4000398
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2	17	297877	3999964

3	17	296402	3999396
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4	17	297458	3999206

☐ See continuation sheet

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Andra Kowalczyk\* and Marilyn Moore (owner)  
organization \*East Tennessee Development District date September 18, 2006  
street & number P.O. Box 249 telephone (865) 273-6003  
city or town Alcoa state TN zip code 37701-0249

### Additional Documentation

submit the following items with the completed form:

### Continuation Sheets

### Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 Or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

### Additional items

(Check with the SHPO) or FPO for any additional items

## Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Marilyn Moore  
street & number 5878 Leepers Ferry Road telephone (423) 585-0550  
city or town Morristown state TN zip code 37813

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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Leeper Farm  
Hamblen County, Tennessee

## VII Physical Description

The 154-acre Leeper Farm is located at 5878 Leepers Ferry Road in Hamblen County, Tennessee near the Nolichucky River and the headwaters of Douglas Lake. It is three miles east of White Pine and seven miles south of Morristown, the county seat. The terrain has rolling hills, pastures, hay fields, and woodlands with some distant views of the Smoky Mountains. The roads and old fence lines define the pastures and fields. Water sources include a well, a spring and creek, two ponds, and an abandoned rock quarry. The property contains the 1896 two-story frame residence updated during the 1920s in the Colonial Revival style, and also several outbuildings associated with a working agricultural landscape. The home is a central hall plan with an offset rear gable. Changes made during the 1920s reflect an area trend towards the efficiency and simplicity of Colonial Revivalism.

### 1. House (1896, contributing building)

The Leeper Farm house was built in 1896 by Benjamin Jarnagin Leeper for his wife, Minerva Brown Leeper, and their ten children. It is situated on a fairly level, two-acre, fenced site that slopes downward to Leepers Ferry Road. The front or east facade faces the road, and an oval driveway on the north side of the yard provides road access for vehicles. The perimeter of the house site has maple, oak, hackberry and walnut trees and shrubs, including some large boxwoods. The original plan of the house was a central hall with a rear ell. Drawings of the 1896 floor plans are included with this nomination.

As originally constructed, the house had four rooms upstairs and four downstairs. In 1922 a downstairs library and an upstairs sitting room and bathroom were added. Also, four new porches were added, as well as a sunroom and a sleeping porch. Plumbing and lighting were amenities added to the home in 1922. The major alterations to the home are characteristic of the Colonial Revival trend of attention to improved health and productivity, as seen in the working farm home and other outbuildings of the Leeper Farm. The original exterior walls have weatherboard siding. Originally, the interior walls were wallpapered; in 1952 they were covered in drywall. The house's original foundation and piers are of limestone. The three original brick chimneys are still visible on the exterior; there were originally five interior fireplaces and a flue for a wood stove in the kitchen. Some of the fireplaces were covered with drywall during renovations in 1952. The original windows are six-over-six, double-hung sash; more windows were added to form paired window units, and a few windows were replaced, in kind, in 1952. After these renovations, the house was painted both inside and outside, and a new concrete walkway was built from the driveway to the house.

The east façade of the home, as depicted in a photo from 1896, originally featured three bays, a central entrance flanked by a window to each side, all under a long, two-story porch. Today the façade of the home retains alterations made during the 1920s: the second-level porch was removed and replaced with a gable portico over the central bay, atop a first-level porch that extends across the entire façade. One window was added to each of the side bays on both first and second stories to form paired window units. These paired windows are six-over-six, double-hung. The 1920s main entrance is in a slightly projecting bay and features a front door paneled on the bottom half with two panes of glass in the top half. A similar door appears on the upper level of the portico. The first-level door also features a four-paned transom and narrow sidelights.

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The upper balcony is closed in as a sleeping porch with screened sections all around and a six-pane awning window within the weatherboard surface in the gable peak. The south bay of the first-level porch is closed in as a sunroom. A set of French doors allows entrance into the sunroom from the front porch. This set of fifteen-paned doors is flanked by a pair of large, narrow single-pane windows. The east façade of the sunroom contains five multi-paned window sections.

The wood façade porch is on limestone piers, and two concrete steps rise to the porch. The porch floorboards needed replacing sometime after the 1980, so these boards are not original. Boxwoods flank the step entrance. The current roof is asphalt shingle, installed after the 1950s, replacing the original tin roof. The first-level columns of the porch are of simple square design and date to 1922. Some rehabilitation of the upper balcony was required more recently, when the sagging beam under the sleeping porch was jacked up and repaired. Two interior brick chimneys are visible on the roof.

The north elevation contains the gable end of the central hall section and a rear gable that extends to the west. Like the other elevations, the north elevation has weatherboard siding. There is a rectangular vent in the peak of the north gable, with a six-over-six double-hung window centered in the second level wall below it. A central door is on the first level and opens into a screened side porch, a 1945 addition. The gable roof of this side porch is lower-pitched than the main roof of the house. The door leading from the porch into the house has a single pane of glass and is topped by a single light transom.

The north elevation of the rear gable has a long porch running almost the length of the rear section. This north porch is a 1922 addition and is enclosed partially in screen and partially in weatherboard. The porch contains a three-over-one double-hung window at the east end, five sections of screen that span the middle of the porch enclosure, an exterior screen door, and a small four-pane window at the west end. Inside the porch are a paired set of six-over-six double-hung windows and a two paned and paneled door. A low-pitched roof covers the porch and is covered with asphalt shingles from ca. 1980. The second floor has a paired set of six-over-six double-hung windows on the east half of the rear gable and a single six-over-six double-hung window on the west half. A brick chimney is visible on the peak of the rear gable.

The west elevation of the home contains the end of the above north porch, the rear gable end, and the end of a closed-in, two-story ell porch, added in 1922, along the south elevation. This west elevation is covered in weatherboard. The peak of the gable contains a central rectangular vent. A six-over-six double-hung window is centered on the second floor and two smaller six-over-six double-hung windows appear in the first floor. The stacked limestone foundation can be seen on this elevation.

The south elevation of the home contains the 1922 closed-in porch along the rear gable, a two-story addition behind the central hall portion, the central hall gable, and the sunroom on the south end of the front porch. The closed-in porch has several openings on each floor covered with screening. The two-story addition has a centered six-over-six double-hung window on the first floor and an offset six-over-six, double-hung window on the second floor. The gable portion contains a centered six-over-six double-hung window on each floor and a rectangular vent in the gable peak. The sunroom has three sections of ten-pane windows,

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Hamblen County, Tennessee

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resembling those on the sunroom's east facade. The stacked limestone foundation can be seen on this elevation.

The main entrance to the house is from the front (east) porch to a central hallway. Changes in the 1920s to the original (1896) front entry provided more light in the downstairs front hallway. The door has two vertical glass panes in the upper half of the door. On either side there are three-pane sidelights. Above the front door and the sidelights is a four-pane fixed transom. The flooring in the hallway, as in all the rooms except the kitchen and the room above it, were replaced with oak flooring and new baseboards in 1952. Also at that time, some new floor sills had to be installed to help level the original sub-floors, and new crown molding and drywall were installed throughout the interior. The downstairs rooms have 9' ceilings.

The central hallway accesses the living room (original parlor) to the south, the multi-purpose room (original sitting room) to the north, and the dining room to the west. A stairway is located on the north wall of the hall. The stairway has stained pine steps and painted risers; there are eleven steps to a landing and three more steps to the upstairs hallway. For the first eleven steps there is a dark polished round rail, a turned newel post, and painted turned balusters. At the landing the stair rail joins a stained rectangular newel post that connects to a plain railing and painted rectangular balusters for the next three steps. The upstairs hallway has two stained square newel posts, a hand railing, and painted rectangular balusters.

North of the main hall is the multi-purpose room. This room previously been used as a bedroom and a sitting room. The brick fireplace in the multi-purpose room is the only original fireplace still intact, although the hearth has a modern insert. The fireplace has a row of headers above the firebox and a simple corbelled design supporting a wood mantelshelf. The north wall has a door with a glass transom that leads to the 1945 screened porch. Also in 1945, space was taken from the east end of the north porch for a small bathroom. The bathroom is accessed from a door on the west wall of the multi-purpose room. A six-paneled wood door on the west wall leads to the dining room. The east wall has paired six-over-six double-hung sash windows.

South of the hall is the living room. The living room is 'L'-shaped, extending north to the dining room. Originally the eastern portion of the room served as a parlor. The western portion of the room is part of an addition that was built in 1922. In 1952, a wall between the original parlor and the 1922 addition was removed and a steel support beam placed across the opening. This change formed the current L-shaped living room.

The north wall of the eastern portion of the room has a crab-orchard stone fireplace supporting a walnut mantelshelf. The hearth is made of slate and the firebox is brick. The fireplace wall has vertical walnut paneling and a built-in bookcase. This is the only wall in the living room with paneling as the other walls have drywall. East of the fireplace a two-panel door connects to the main hall. On the east wall paired six-over-six double-hung sash windows look out into the sunroom. Two pocket doors with 15 panes each connect the living room and dining room.

The dining room is accessible from the living room, multi-purpose room and the kitchen. A six paneled door on the east wall leads to the multi-purpose room, and a five paneled door on the west wall leads to the

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Hamblen County, Tennessee

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kitchen. The north wall has paired six-over-six double-hung windows that look out onto the enclosed north porch.

West of the dining room is the kitchen. The kitchen has doors on the north and south walls. The north door is still an exterior one, opening onto the north enclosed porch. However, the south door off the kitchen changed from an exterior door to an interior one when the porch on the south side of the kitchen was replaced in 1922 with an enclosed two-story porch. Both doors are paneled in the lower half and have glass panes in the upper half. The kitchen was remodeled in 1945. Kitchen remodeling included custom built-in cabinets, a two-compartment sink, two small six-over-six windows on the west wall, and wiring for a refrigerator and electric stove. The modern appliances replaced a wood cook-stove on the east wall of the kitchen where there was a flue for the chimney. The door to the dining room was replaced with a swinging door. The kitchen floor was removed after 1980, and floor sills were made level and new hardwood flooring installed. The kitchen retains its historic wallboard, beadboard ceiling, and wide baseboards.

The stairway in the main hall leads up to a second floor hall that gives access to the sleeping porch and two bedrooms. A two-pane and paneled door on the east wall leads to the sleeping porch. The sleeping porch has beadboard on the walls below the screened openings. The north and south bedrooms each have paired six-over-six double-hung windows on their east walls. The north bedroom also has a single six-over-six double-hung window in the north wall, while the south bedroom has an identical window in the south wall. These bedrooms measure 15' by 15' and have 8' ceilings. Each of these bedrooms has a fireplace that was covered with drywall in 1952.

A third bedroom is accessed from a paneled door in the west wall of the north bedroom. This bedroom has paired six-over-six double-hung windows on the north wall. A two-panel door in the south wall of the bedroom leads to a bathroom that is part of a 1922 addition. The bathroom also has a door on the west wall leading to the second floor of the south enclosed porch and a door on the south wall leading to the sitting room. The sitting room has single six-over-six double-hung windows in its south and west walls. A paneled door in the east wall leads back into the south bedroom.

The second floor of the south enclosed porch, built in 1922, has a staircase in the northwest corner and a door in its north wall that leads to a fourth bedroom that is currently used as a storage room. This room has single six-over-six double-hung windows in its north and west walls. A fireplace originally located on the east wall was covered with drywall in 1952. This room was originally accessed through an interior staircase from the kitchen. The staircase was removed in 1922 when the south porch was replaced with the current two story porch.

After Leora Leeper Powers and her husband, William H. Powers, acquired the house in the early 1920s, they made a number of improvements to the house and farm. In 1922, they renovated the house, installed indoor plumbing, built a two-story addition, and expanded and altered porches and windows to allow in more light and fresh air. During this time a well was dug to provide water for the bathroom and kitchen. Previously, an underground cistern with a hand pump provided rainwater for general use, drinking water came from the Leeper Spring located across the road, and an outdoor privy was located a short distance from the back



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porch. A Delco lighting system was also installed for lighting. While the interior rooms of the original house had few changes, the two-story addition and the new porches changed the appearance of the exterior of the house on all four sides. The Colonial Revival style, embracing simplicity and productivity, became the popular architectural design during this period. Interior changes were made and a central heating system was installed in 1952.

## 2. Smokehouse (1896, contributing building)

The smokehouse (16' x 24') was built about the same time as the house. For about fifty years it was used for curing pork. It is located approximately 30' north of the house. It has weatherboard siding with the original faded red paint and a tin roof. There is a door centered on the south wall and another door on the north wall. It has two half windows on the east wall and one full window on the south wall; all three windows are covered with wood shutters. In 2000 the original sills under the exterior walls had termite damage and had to be removed and replaced with new pressure-treated sills. A woodshed (8 ½' x 15') for keeping firewood dry was attached to the north elevation of the smokehouse (date unknown). It has vertical boards for siding. In 2000 the slanted tin roof was replaced and a door was added on the north elevation of the shed addition.

## 3. Old Tenant House (c. 1920, contributing building)

High on a hill west of the main house is a one-story four-room house with a metal hip roof that is built on a foundation of rock piers. The building measures 24' x 28' and has board and batten siding. The front of the house faces south and has a deteriorated front porch that is supported by wood boards. There is a central door to a front room that has two windows and a flue for a stove. On the northwest corner of the house there is a small back porch that has a brick cistern and two doors to the interior. The north side of the house has two windows, and the west side has a door and two windows. Several windows are missing from their openings. According to family members the building was used as a tenant house in the 1920s. In recent years it has been used for storing hay.

## 4. Well House (1952 contributing building)

In 1952 a concrete block well house replaced the original log well house. The block well house measures 6'8" x 8'. The gable roof is of asphalt shingle to match the roof installed on the house ca. 1980. An electric pump now supplies well water for the house, barn, and watering troughs for the animals.

## 5. Barn (c. 1922, contributing building)

Lee Powers, designed the large barn and supervised its construction. It is located northeast of the house across Leepers Ferry Road and faces south. The foundation is made of concrete, and the exterior walls are of weatherboard stained brown. The roof has two cupolas for ventilation, an old weathervane, and the original tin roof that is painted red. The gambrel roof design has shed roof extensions that cover one-story aisles on the east, west, and north elevations. The south façade has a central opening and openings for the two side aisles. There is a long central hallway with animal stalls, areas for storing feed and equipment, and a stairway to a large hay loft that is located under the gambrel roof. The hayloft has an opening so that hay can be unloaded from wagons directly to the loft; it also has openings on the sides and back so that hay can be

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thrown down to animals below. There is a large concrete water tank located inside at the northeast corner of the back aisle. The barn structure and appearance have not been changed, but electrical connections and equipment for handling cattle have been added. Over the years it has been used for horses, mules, dairy cattle and beef cattle.

## 6. Grain Barn (c. 1922, contributing building)

The grain barn (27' x 40') is located close to the east side of Leepers Ferry Road and northwest of the large barn. It has a metal gable roof and has novelty board siding. It has a long open hallway on the west side with an entrance on the north elevation. From the hallway there are doors to the grain storage areas and a stairway to a loft. A shed has been attached to the south elevation of the building. Originally the grain barn was used for storing wheat and corn.

## 7. Leeper Spring (contributing site)

The large Leeper Spring is located down a steep hill just across Leepers Ferry Road from the residence. The location of the spring originally determined the site of the 1896 Leeper house, as well as other buildings on the property. The spring water emerges from beneath rock at the base of the hillside. Though the spring's flow rate has not been determined, the volume of water becomes a small creek as it flows downhill to the river.<sup>1</sup> A springhouse was historically located at the spring, but was torn down at an unknown date.

## 8. Rock Quarry Site (1958, non-contributing)

The rock quarry was created in 1958 when the federal government needed large quantities of stone to use in the construction of I-81 and I-40. Vulcan Materials Company (dba White Pine Stone Company) leased a ten-acre site high on a hill north of the farm residence to mine limestone rock to sell for the interstate highway construction.<sup>2</sup> The resulting quarry has a top elevation of 1210 feet; the elevation of the water surface is 1100 feet, and the bottom of the quarry is at an elevation of 1040 feet. The craggy limestone landscape has become studded with cedar trees since abandoned for mining, and the quarry contributes to the

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<sup>1</sup> Until a well was dug in the 1920s it was the primary source of drinking water for farm owners who purposely located their houses near the spring. During the 19th century water to turn the wheel at the Leeper Mill came from the Leeper Spring that provided water for the mill pond. In the 1930s there was a springhouse located where the water comes out from the hillside; it was designed to protect the water and to hold crocks for keeping milk and other foods cool in warm weather. Although there could be artifacts in the spring area as the first farmhouse and farm slave cabins were located near the spring, no archaeological investigations have been done. There have been requests from persons for permission to dig for artifacts in the spring area. Approvals have not been given, and there is no evidence that there has been any excavation at the site.

<sup>2</sup> Hamblen County, Book 104, 557-62. After the Powers family rejected an offer from White Pine Stone Company to purchase ten acres of the farm, they agreed to lease the ten acres to White Pine Stone Company for a monthly rent and a royalty. Large quantities of rock were removed from the Powers ten acres and the adjoining property that White Pine Stone Company purchased from others. The quarry was abandoned after ground water began to seep into the bottom and interfere with the mining operation. The lease was terminated, and White Pine Stone Company then sold the other property they had purchased.

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fifty acres of the farm that has become a refuge for wildlife including fish and other aquatic species, migrating geese and ducks, turkey, and deer.<sup>3</sup>

## 9. Tobacco Barn (1980, non-contributing building)

Alice Moser Powers hired Burl Frazier to build a tobacco barn (32' x 80') to cure and store burley tobacco that was grown on the farm for many years. It was under construction when she died in 1980. The barn faces southeast and is located on the west side of Leepers Ferry Road on a lot adjacent to the residence site. It is a typical East Tennessee burley tobacco barn with high walls and a series of sliding doors. The walls are finished with vertical boards, and it has a red tin gabled roof with openings for ventilation just under the roof. The tobacco leaves were harvested and threaded on poles that were hung to air dry in the barn. When the laborer who grew the tobacco on shares retired in 1985, the owners stopped growing tobacco. The barn is presently used for hay and equipment storage.

## 10. Garage (2000, non-contributing building)

The garage is located on the northwest corner of the residence site a short distance from the smokehouse. In 2000 John Patterson constructed the present garage on the same site as the 1930s garage for Marilyn Moore. It was designed to appear similar to the residence with white vinyl siding and a gray asphalt shingle gable roof. The foundation and floor are concrete, and the interior walls are plywood. It has space for four vehicles with garage doors on the north and south ends of the facade and two open spaces in the center. It measures 28' x 48'.

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<sup>3</sup> Hamblen County, Notebook N, 337. Lee Powers acquired his brothers' interests in the ten-acre quarry tract from their estates. He bought another ten-acre tract that was part of the quarry in 1987, thus making twenty acres and approximately 2/3 of the abandoned rock quarry part of the farm.

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Hamblen County, Tennessee**VIII Statement of Significance**

The Leeper Farm in Hamblen County, Tennessee, is being nominated for listing in the National Register under Criteria A and C for architecture and agriculture. The introduction of a progressive vision of simplicity, efficiency, and good health influenced stylistic and functional alterations in the twentieth century farmhouse in Tennessee. The Colonial Revival features of the Leeper house reflect local social and agricultural trends for the early twentieth century. The expansion of some of the window openings and the alterations to the porches were designed to increase light and air flow through the house. The farm retains a good collection of outbuildings including barns, a tenant house, and a smokehouse. These outbuildings reflect the continuing use of the property as a working farm that has produced tobacco, corn, grains, cattle, pigs, and poultry. Updating of nineteenth century farm homes in the Colonial Revival style is common in Tennessee during the early twentieth century, as seen in the A. E. Perkins House in Campbell County (NR 12/08/1997), the Alexander Smith House in Williamson County (NR 3/17/2005), and Rippavilla in Maury County (NR 7/19/1996). The farm is a Tennessee Century Farm, having been worked by the same family for over one hundred years.

The present Leeper Farm originated from Revolutionary War grant #51 in 1786 to Thomas Jarnagin (1746-1802) and an adjoining 105 acre tract he purchased from James Hill in 1800. When Thomas Jarnagin died he left 305 acres to his daughter Rhoda as her part of the 4,370 acres in his estate that was divided among his eleven children. Rhoda Jarnagin Lea and her husband Major Lea sold the land to her brother Preston Jarnagin in 1817. Preston amassed 615 acres, running the farm, a mill, a ferry, a whiskey still, and a country store. He traded in livestock as well. His assorted activities accumulated debt, and after his death, his widow sold the entire property at auction in the 1830s to a group of three partners. By 1838 Lewis Feltner (L.F.) Leeper controlled a half interest in the property, and by 1854 he owned approximately 465 acres including the house, the mill and the ferry.<sup>4</sup>

In 1834, Lewis Feltner Leeper married Lucinda Jarnagin, granddaughter of Thomas, returning the farm to its original family. However, the Jarnagin name disappeared from the farm over time, as the Leepers made improvements to existing buildings and landmarks, such as Leeper Mill, Leeper Ferry, and Leeper Springs. In addition to farming, Lewis was engaged in community service in (then) Jefferson County. As a land surveyor experienced in construction, he laid out the town of White Pine. In the 1840s he was elected justice of the peace for his district, holding the position until 1870, when his district became part of the newly established Hamblen County.<sup>5</sup>

During this time, Tennessee agriculture had expanded beyond mere self-sufficiency of the family farm, allowing rural families to sell or barter some of their own produce for other food or products they did not grow or raise.<sup>6</sup> The Leeper farm exemplifies this growth of family farming into commercial enterprise during

<sup>4</sup> Jefferson County Archives, Chancery Court and Tennessee Supreme Court Case files, 1850-54; "Leeper Farm," available at website [http://histpres.mtsu.edu/centfarms/hamblen\\_county/#Leeper\\_Farm](http://histpres.mtsu.edu/centfarms/hamblen_county/#Leeper_Farm) accessed July 24, 2006; Lee L. Powers, *Thomas Jarnagin: 1746-1802*, 1985 Edition (Lake Lure, NC: author, 1985), 24, 26E, 26F, 27, 73, 75, 88B 117-118A.

<sup>5</sup> Hamblen County Court Minutes, 1870-1873; Powers, 75-7.

<sup>6</sup> Donald L. Winters, "Agriculture," available at website <http://tennesseencyclopedia.net/> accessed July 11, 2006.

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the first half of the nineteenth century. The Leeper farm produced crops of timber, tobacco, corn, grains, fruits, and vegetables for family use and to sell. Horses were kept for transportation and farm labor, cows for milk and beef, pigs for pork, and poultry for eggs and meat. In addition to a traditional farming operation, L. F. Leeper had a cabinet shop, a store, a mill, and a ferry across the Nolichucky River. He made furniture and coffins from pine, oak, cherry, and walnut.

Lewis Feltnor Leeper's son, Benjamin Jarnagin Leeper (1835-1901), worked with Zebidee Holt, an experienced mill manager, to learn to operate the mill. Benjamin later married Holt's granddaughter, Minerva Brown. During the Civil War, Benjamin remained on the farm, operating the mill. The Leeper property suffered great damage and loss, and after the war Benjamin and his father, Lewis, worked to restore the farm operation, having to replace livestock and slave labor.<sup>7</sup>

Benjamin Jarnagin Leeper managed the ferry and the mill and assisted his father with the management of the farm and other enterprises. Sometime after the birth of their first child they moved in with Benjamin's parents in a house built by Preston Jarnagin. Lewis Leeper moved to an adjoining farm in 1873, when he married widow Caroline Carson, following the death of his first wife, Lucinda. Benjamin and Minerva had nine more children. Though Preston Jarnagin's 1815 dwelling was structurally sound, it was too small for the large Leeper family. The house was demolished, and Benjamin used some of the materials on the new house he built in 1896 across the road.<sup>8</sup>

During the middle nineteenth century, house plan designs for farm families appeared in print with increasing regularity. A variety of literature on subjects from agricultural to housekeeping to child-rearing commented on the floor plan and design of farmhouses. By the 1880s, farmhouses evolved from a "unified workplace" into "a collection of individual rooms, [as] the gap between work and family became more and more pronounced." The kitchen became "specialized and isolated," children's play areas were moved away from the kitchen, and children and adolescents came to have their own bedrooms. The farmhouse had a sitting room, open to all ages and genders for socializing and relaxing, unlike its urban counterpart, the parlor, used only by women.<sup>9</sup>

These design innovations can be seen in the 1896 Leeper house. The dwelling not only increased space for the large Leeper family, it also evidenced the division of work and leisure. At the front of the house, a pair of rooms flanked the main entrance hall. One was a room for formal social gathering; the second room served as a family sitting room, separated from the rear kitchen by a dining room/passageway. The kitchen had a separate pantry and its own porch for preserving food, butchering, and milk churning. A stairway from the

<sup>7</sup> "Benjamin Jarnagin Leeper Inherits the Farm: 1888-1917," unpublished document, 61; Lee L. Powers, "The Lewis F. Leeper Farm, 1838-1888," 57-8.

<sup>8</sup> "Benjamin Jarnagin Leeper Inherits the Farm: 1888-1917," 61-2; Powers, *Thomas Jarnagin: 1746-1802*, 196-199F. (By measuring the original foundation of the Preston Jarnagin house and documenting oral histories from his aunts who lived there, Lee Powers made drawings of the exterior and a floor plan.)

<sup>9</sup> Sally McMurry, *In Families and Farmhouses in Nineteenth Century America: Vernacular Design and Social Change* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1997), 7-9.

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kitchen to the second floor provided Minerva a personal passage to a room where she had her spinning wheel, loom, quilt frames, and other items for making clothes and household items.

At this time, the family had some income from operating the mill and a river ferry, and the farm was self-sufficient with an orchard, a garden, a chicken lot, a pigpen, a barn, and fields and pastures. When hogs were butchered, the meat was cured or canned as sausage. Large outdoor iron pots of varying sizes, still found on the farm, were used to heat water at hog killing time and on wash days.

The site of the new house was three hundred yards from the demolished Leeper dwelling (built by Preston Jarnagin), and uphill. Lee Powers, a grandson of Minerva and Benjamin Leeper noted that this was a better location except for the greater distance from the spring. Until a well was dug near the house in the 1920s it was the primary source of drinking water for farm owners who purposely located their houses near the spring. Drinking water had to be carried up the steep hill to the house. Rainwater collected from the house roof was stored in an underground cistern and used for washing. An outdoor privy was located a short distance from the back porch.

Certainly, Leeper considered the greater effort required in accessing the family's water source; however, the site location of his new house, at a higher elevation, would catch the breeze through windows, enjoy more sunlight and sit above the downhill flow of rain water on the ground surface. This plan addressed the growing social attention to health and hygiene that was becoming intertwined with domestic ideology at the time. As current literature conveyed a cultural trend of an agrarian ideal, increasing attention to women's housekeeping management became central to a healthy family in both urban and rural settings. This ideology influenced patterns of urban exodus, house plan designs, and gender roles in an era of progressivism.<sup>10</sup>

In the post-Civil War South's climate of increasing economic prosperity and progressivism, a new cultural design emphasized strict gender (as well as racial) roles. In the South agriculture played a major role in this vision. Agricultural productivity expanded with improvements in machinery and greater specialization, eliminating the need for extra hands. Agriculture and domesticity effectively became agents of division of gender roles in farm households, reflected in architectural trends. New agricultural implements required specialized outbuildings and allowed a single farmer to do the work of several helpers. Women, formerly in charge of swine and milk cows, were to focus on the health of the household and family. Thus, architecture on a working farm at the turn of the twentieth century became gender specific, with men in barns and sheds and women in the kitchens and sewing rooms.<sup>11</sup>

The trends of progressive farming and homemaking were evident during the Fifth Annual Hamblen County Fair, in September of 1911. The fair's *Premium List* (a printed catalog of categories in which one could enter farm-grown or homemade products, for judging) exemplifies the separation of gender-specific

<sup>10</sup> Ellen Swallow Richards, "Human Ecology and the Habits of Sanitation in the Modern Urban Environment," in Chris J. Magoc, *So Glorious the Landscape: Nature and the Environment in American History and Culture* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resource, Inc., 2002), 142-3; Margaret Marsh, *Suburban Lives* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1990), 15-7; McMurry, 89-90.

<sup>11</sup> McMurry, 64, 94-5.

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responsibilities of early twentieth-century farms, with prize categories divided into farm or household headings. Items produced outside were from the farmer's domain, and inside, from the woman's realm. Even garden vegetables and fruits, grown in the yard close to the farmhouse, appear in the Premium booklet grouped with hays, tobacco, and grains, rather than with the household products derived from the produce such as canned vegetables, fruit preserves, and baked goods. Only one livestock category specified women's participation, the ladies driving class. The commercial advertisements throughout the booklet reinforced the themes of domesticity, household improvements, health, and productivity prevalent during this period: a sewing machine with new and improved ergonomics; paint and wallpaper materials, contractors, and interior decorators; electrical contractors and fixtures; farm fertilizer and diverse implements; and "fancy" grocery store products.<sup>12</sup>

The larger East Tennessee region was eager to offer its new progressive image to visitors at the Appalachian Expositions in the early twentieth century. In "The New South on Display: the Appalachian Expositions of 1910 and 1911," Robert D. Lukens writes that the region desired to convince visitors and locals alike of its new standards of "civic cooperation, industrialization, urbanization, agricultural efficiency."<sup>13</sup> A visit and speech by United States Forest Service Chief, Gifford Pinchot during the 1910 event reinforced the credibility of the expo's purpose. Pinchot embraced a national ideology of conservation and efficiency, implying an integral role of farmers in the economy and management of the region. The expositions emphasized traditional roles for women and African-Americans by showcasing special departments for each on the fairgrounds. At the Women's Building, "[e]xhibits promoted the "science" of efficient cooking, cleaning, and child care in contrast to unnecessary "extravagance." A model kitchen with a stocked pantry was on display.<sup>14</sup> The separation of the woman's sphere within the household can be seen in architecture, such as the Leeper House, as Minerva's kitchen, pantry, and sewing/weaving room were a distinct unit.

Following Benjamin Leeper's death in 1901, his widow Minerva and the children inherited the home and the remaining 300 acres of the farm, which they continued to manage. Minerva lived in the house until her death in 1917, when the farm was parceled up among nine living children. Minerva's daughter Leora Leeper Powers' parcel included the 1896 home. Some of Leora's siblings who had moved away sold their shares to members of the Powers family. By 1920 Leora and her husband, William H. Powers owned approximately 160 acres, and this remnant constitutes the Leeper Farm today.

William Powers, a building contractor as a young man, became the farm manager. Tenants and hired help provided farm labor. Powers had dairy cows and sold milk, raised tobacco as a cash crop, and grew corn and other grains for animal food for horses, cattle, pigs and chickens. He also bought and sold horses and mules in the area, attending monthly animal sales in Morristown. The dairy was considered a Grade B dairy as the milk was put by the road in large cans for pick up and processing into dry milk or other milk products. Some

<sup>12</sup> *Annual Premium List: Fifth Annual Fair, September 5-8, 1911* (Morristown, TN: Morristown Fair Association, 1911), 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 32, 34, 38, 50, 60, 62.

<sup>13</sup> Robert D. Lukens. "The New South on Display: the Appalachian Expositions of 1910 and 1911," *The Journal of East Tennessee History*, No. 96, 1997.

<sup>14</sup> *Annual Premium List: Fifth Annual Fair, September 5-8, 1911*, 40; Robert D. Lukens, "The New South on Display: the Appalachian Expositions of 1910 and 1911," *The Journal of East Tennessee History*, No. 96, 1997, 1, 3, 12, 18-9.

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of the milk was for home use; a large milk separator, used to separate the cream from the rest of the milk, was kept on the back porch of the home.

Architectural additions to the Leeper-Powers farm and home during the 1920s accentuated the progressive trend towards efficiency, gender division of farm work, and healthful home design. A large animal barn and a small grain barn were constructed, and improvements were made to the 1896 Leeper home in 1922.

Improvements to the Leeper home, emphasizing practicality and simplicity, reflect the Colonial Revival style popular across the region during the 1920s. Removing the original upper and lower front porches and replacing them redesigned the home's east façade. The lower front porch was enlarged, and the south bay became an enclosed sunroom. Over the central bay of the new porch a sleeping room was constructed with a gable roof that resembles an oversize dormer to the house main roof. The sleeping porch has a door to the upstairs hall and is screened on three sides. This arrangement allowed comfortable sleeping in the fresh air. Below the sleeping porch, the home's main entrance was fitted with transom and sidelight fenestration to allow more light into the house. These improvements, as well as the use of white paint on the exterior, were indicative of the Colonial Revival trend towards health and sanitation.<sup>15</sup> Three new side porches were added, creating many new options for access to air and light. In about 1922 a well was dug and a log well house constructed to protect the well and a gasoline pump. It was located between the house and smokehouse on the north side of the house. The pump ran periodically to fill a water tower that supplied water to newly installed indoor plumbing in the kitchen and new bathroom. Sewage was carried to a covered cesspool away from the house. These additions replaced the need for the privy at the back of the house, cistern water, and trips to the spring for drinking water. At this same time, a Delco lighting system was installed, with a dropped light socket in each room. These improvements increased the hygiene and efficiency of the home.

In 1922 William Powers decided to build a new barn, designed by his son Lee Powers. The barn needed to be multi-purpose to accommodate his variety of animals, equipment, and hay. The barn, located across Leepers Ferry Road from the residence, features a central hall with overhead hayloft. A worker in the loft could dispense hay into the animal stalls to either side of the central hall. For added efficiency of sorting and feeding animals or milking dairy cows, the design included a U-shaped hall running along the sides and back of the barn.

Powers constructed a second smaller barn for storing wheat and corn. It is located close enough to the animal barn for convenience in feeding, yet stores the grain separately from livestock to prevent their rummaging for extra rations. This plan was both practical and preventative of potential colic from overeating, dangerous for equines.

This was roughly the period of Hamblen County's greatest agricultural productivity, (as for the state of Tennessee as well). The population of all livestock (horses, mules, cattle, sheep, goat, swine, and poultry) reached 60,633 in 1910, continued to rise and peaked at 98,921 head in 1920, then declined to 70,666 in

<sup>15</sup> Blythe Semmer, "A. E. Perkins House," National Register of Historic Places Nomination, 1997, Section 8, Page 8, reference to Bridget A. May's "Progressivism and the Colonial Revival: The Modern Colonial House, 1900-1920."



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1930. The year 1919 saw the highest use of agricultural lime and commercial fertilizers for field crops for the period between 1879 and 1939, indicative of maximum production. In Hamblen County, dairy cows and poultry were more prevalent than sheep and cattle during these decades and leading into the World War II period.<sup>16</sup>

During the Depression years, as was typical of agriculture across the state, the Leeper-Powers farm became a subsistence farm for several members of the Powers family. Again the garden, orchards, and animals supplied most of the family food, and wood was cut on the farm for the stove and fireplaces. The Delco lighting system was no longer operative, and oil lamps were the only source of light during night hours. During this time only essential maintenance was done on the house and outbuildings.

The economy gradually improved during the New Deal era. When Holston Electric Co-op ran electric lines to the area, there were new incentives to improve the living conditions on the farm. The house was wired for lighting and kitchen appliances: refrigerator, washer and dryer, and freezer. When Leora Leeper Powers died in 1943, the farm went to her husband William. Their son, Ross, and his wife Alice Moser Powers lived upstairs, and Alice assumed management of the home. William continued to manage the farm. Around 1952, three of William's sons, Ross, Lee, and Hayward, agreed to share the costs of improvements to the home, with Lee supervising the work. Local contractors were used. A central oil furnace and a water heater were installed in the basement, and some fireplaces were covered with drywall. The home received aesthetic updates such as new flooring, lighting, and a new Crab Orchard stone fireplace. Generally, these 1950s improvements speak to the improving post-war economy and availability of modern amenities.

While the early settlers in the late 18th century had large land holdings, the size of farms in the area gradually decreased when property was either sold or divided among heirs. With the growth and industrial development of Hamblen County in the 20th century this trend continues in 2006, as even small farms are being subdivided into residential lots. Some area farmers still grow tobacco and a variety of other crops, but many, including the present owner of the Leeper Farm, now grow pastures and hay for beef cattle. The updates to the Leeper home indicate a regional trend that expressed new attention to simplicity and efficiency as farms grew from self-sufficiency to greater production in a market economy, and as households became driven by the goal of engendering efficiency and good health. The Leeper Farm is significant as a local example of an intact farmstead, with the land farmed through several generations and exemplifies the Colonial Revival trend.

<sup>16</sup> A. R. Aandahl, *Soil Survey: Hamblen County, Tennessee* (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of Agriculture, 1946) Series 1940, No. 1, 6, 13, 17.

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## Verbal Boundary Description

This farm property lies approximately seven miles from Morristown within Hamblen County, Tennessee. The property lies on both sides of Leepers Ferry Road. It comprises parcels 034.00, 036.00, 038.00, and 040.00 on tax map 062 in Hamblen County. The map scale is 1"= 400' and is the best available map for this area.

See attached tax map.

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### **PHOTOGRAPHS**

Leeper Farm

Hamblen County, TN

Photos by David B. Mead

Date: Photographs 1-25, 27-29: September 6, 2006; Photograph 26: June 25, 2005

Digital Printing: Printer: Hewlett Packard DeskJet #6540; Paper: HP Premium Grade Glossy Photo paper

1 of 28 East facade of house. Photographer facing west.

2 of 28 North elevation and east facade of house. Photographer facing southwest.

3 of 28 North elevation of house. Photographer facing south.

4 of 28 West elevation of house. Photographer facing southeast.

5 of 28 South elevation of house showing additions (1922) of rooms, porches, sunroom and sleeping porch.

6 of 28 Sunroom with wicker swing and chair (1922 renovation). Photographer facing south.

7 of 28 Interior view of door with sidelights and glass transom. Photographer facing east.

8 of 28 View of original stairway to second story and part of downstairs hall and door to dining room.  
Photographer facing west.

9 of 28 Historic brick fireplace, mantel, and hearth in multi-purpose room. Photographer facing south.

10 of 28 Living Room. Shows 1952 renovation of fireplace wall and double windows with cornice on east wall. Photographer facing northeast.

11 of 28 Living Room. Shows sliding pocket doors (1952 renovation) to dining room and bookcases.  
Photographer facing north.

12 of 28 Dining Room. Shows original door to multi-purpose room. Photographer facing north.

13 of 28 Dining Room. Shows door to kitchen. Photographer facing west.

14 of 28 Kitchen. Shows original beaded ceiling and cabinets, Photographer facing southwest.

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15 of 28 Second story screened sleeping porch (1922) with view of yard, circular driveway and north pasture. Photographer facing north.

16 of 28 Second story southeast bedroom with part of doorway to sitting room. Photographer facing southwest.

17 of 28 Second story northeast bedroom. Photographer facing northwest.

18 of 28 Second story north bedroom with door to bathroom. Photographer facing southwest.

19 of 28 Smokehouse and well house. Photographer facing west.

20 of 28 Old tenant house. Photographer facing northwest.

21 of 28 Large barn on east side of Leepers Ferry Road. Photographer facing northeast.

22 of 28 Grain barn next to east side of Leepers Ferry Road. Photographer facing southeast.

23 of 28 Garage and part of oval driveway. Photographer facing west.

24 of 28 Tobacco barn. Photographer facing northwest.

25 of 28 Leeper Spring at source where it flows from hillside. Photographer facing northeast.

26 of 28 View of rock quarry and wildlife area. Photographer facing southwest.

27 of 28 Cattle resting in shade of cedar trees in east pasture next to Keller Road. Photographer facing east.

28 of 28 Landscape view of pastures north and south of Powers Road. Haze obscured distant view of mountains. Photographer facing southwest.